

## LINGUISTIC FAIRY-TALE AS A METHOD OF TEACHING GRAMMAR AT PRIMARY SCHOOL

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*The article is devoted to making up linguistic fairy-tales in teaching primary schoolchildren English grammar. The author shares her teacher's experience and shows some ways how to apply the method in different grammatical aspects and inspire schoolchildren to create their own linguistic stories. First the teacher sets an example of some linguistic stories and then stimulates students to compose their own linguistic fairy-tales to perceive some grammatical aspects, like verb forms and word order in sentences. The author comes to conclusion that the method really works with primary schoolchildren because they perceive grammatical constructions more effectively with the help of fabulous linguistics stories created by themselves.*

*Key words: a linguistic fairy-tale, grammar, primary schoolchildren.*

English grammar seems to be very strange and complicated to many young learners. Tense categories, verb forms, word order in sentences differ a lot from rules in mother language and primary school students often get puzzled. Some peculiarities of children's thinking also play an important role: sometimes abstract thinking prevails imaginative one, sometimes imaginative thinking predominates [12, p. 49]. There are some children whose imaginative and abstract thinking are quite balanced. According to psychologists' research, concrete thinking predominates at the age of primary school, that's why it's quite difficult for young learners to perceive theoretical content of textbooks. As a rule, primary schoolchildren just learn the rules by heart and they don't realize the sense and the aim of learning [2, p.120].

A teacher needs more vivid and creative ways of new grammar material introduction, in order students could perceive the material more effectively and knew how to apply all these constructions in building up phrases and making up dialogues. From methodical point of view, a linguistic fairy-tale is an effective way of introduction, generalization and systematization of grammatical knowledge. A linguistic fairy-tale is considered as a special didactical story with a fabulous or everyday situation which is used for presenting information about some linguistic phenomena, rules and norms of the given language [8, p.4].

This method is considered to be effective because it's quite close to gaming method. Linguistic fairy-tale evokes emotional feedback from children and determines successful memorization of a new grammatical material. School textbooks contain lots of theory and terms which are not clear and not interesting for schoolchildren. Converting language terms and classifications into fabulous images and plots, a teacher can achieve student's cognitive and creative activity development and child's personality improvement. Linguistic fairy-tale is one of the ways which can make learning process more conscious and adapt theoretical material to children's perception. First of all, pupils need grammar to construct phrases and make up

dialogues, and a fairy-tale can demonstrate young students the way how these items cooperate in speech [9, p.86].

Linguistic fairy-tales can be used in class in such ways:

- As a didactical material;
- As a way of a new material introduction and the previous knowledge updating;
- As a way of speaking skills development [4, p.41];

Linguistic fairy-tale creation by pupils themselves stimulates children's imagination, logical thinking and cognitive activity. There are 3 main communicative purposes of linguistic fairy-tales:

1) A new material introduction.

A linguistic fairy-tale at once attracts pupils' attention to the topic, helps them to see the main features of a linguistic phenomenon and easily memorize it. A problematic question stated at the beginning of the fairy-tale, motivates pupils to perceive the material effectively. Students don't just listen to the story – they have to find the solution of the problem.

2) Checking up knowledge. A linguistic fairy-tale can follow the theoretical material introduction. Problematic question is also stated at the beginning of the story but in this case a fairy-tale is a way of knowledge updating. This way a teacher can begin the phrase and the pupils can continue the sentence naming the characters – parts of speech.

3) To entertain a bit and keep pupils' interest to the topic

Practicing linguistic fairy-tales helps to present a material in an available, interesting and vivid form, evoking interest to the topic and creating a positive background of the class. A fairy-tale increases lesson effectiveness at all the stages of a material learning [3, p.160].

There are some peculiarities of a linguistic fairy-tale:

- A linguistic fairy-tale explains the rules of the language: verb forms, word order, spelling and so on.
- A linguistic fairy-tale consists of fabulous elements, magic transformations, characters, some stated expressions. In a linguistic fairy-tale parts of speech and members of a sentence are transformed into proud queens, beautiful princesses, brave knights and other characters living in a fabulous country [6, p.53].

This academic year students of a language school «Little Stars» at the age from 8 till 10 took part in an experiment – making up linguistic fairy-tales while learning English grammar at the lessons. The pupils were suggested to get acquainted with grammatical material in a fabulous form and then create their own stories for the topics the verb to be in Present Simple, verb form in Present Simple and Present Continuous Tenses, word order in questions (Present Simple) and word order in questions with the verb have/has got.

While new grammatical material introduction the teacher tells students the story about the verb To Be, who was in friendship with personal pronouns. The verb To Be visited his friends-pronouns and put on special clothes for every friend. He put on a dress Am for his friend I, put on a dress Are for his friends You, We, They and put on a dress Is for his friends He, She, It. Comparison of the verb form with clothes helps the students to understand the idea that the verb changes its form like a dress. On the basis of this fairy-tale children made up their own stories and presented such plots:

1. The forms of the verb To Be are three rivers: Am, Are and Is, and personal pronouns are frogs which splash in different rivers. Froggie I likes splashing in the river Am. Frogs You, We and They prefer the river Are. Frogs He, She and It like swimming in the river Is.
2. The forms of the verb To Be are three clews: Am, Are and Is, and personal pronouns are kittens which play with different clews.
3. Some pupils compared forms of the verb To Be – Am, Are and Is with wolves which hunted different hares – personal pronouns.
4. Some pupils presented the forms of the verb to be like three galaxies: Am, Are and Is which contain different stars – personal pronouns.

While learning word order in questions children should understand that the verb is stated at the beginning of the sentence. To make it clear the teacher names the verb as the most curious part of speech: every time he hears the question, he runs straight ahead. In order to memorize a logical chain: interrogative word -> auxiliary verb -> subject -> notional verb, schoolchildren create their own order and hierarchy for the parts of the sentence:

1. According to one of the versions, an interrogative word is a dragon that challenges an auxiliary verb – a brave knight. Next to the knight stands his faithful horse – a subject. Together they protect a lovely princess – a notional verb. She stands at the end of the sentence in order the dragon could not reach her.
  2. Word order in a question can be compared with a nutrition chain in nature. This way some pupils imagined that an interrogative word is a tree – the first part of a chain. The tree is being crunched by a mouse – an auxiliary verb, the second part of a chain. The mouse is being hunted by an owl – a subject, and the owl is being hunted by a wolf – a notional verb, which ends up the chain.
  3. Some pupils tried to carry out the plot of a linguistic fairy-tale on the plot of our Russian folk fairy-tales, like “Turnip”. Children imagined that an interrogative word is a turnip. The Granddad is an auxiliary verb who pulls the turnip. The Grandma - subject comes next to help and Granddaughter – a notional verb helps the Grandma. A cat, a dog and a mouse in this fairy-tale are secondary members of the sentence.
  4. Some pupils compared word order as an order of cars in the procession of an important general. So, at the beginning of the sentence goes a big military machine – an interrogative word. Next follows a лимузин – an auxiliary verb, then goes a tank – a subject and at the end of the procession flies a military helicopter – a notional verb which looks after the parade.
- All the fairy-tales illustrated word-order are being staged. The pupils choose each other roles and role-play the fairy-tale.

In word order with have/has got pupils should understand that have and has are maintained as auxiliary verbs that's why they stand at the beginning of the question sentence. Then follows a subject and after that stands the second part of the verb – got. The teacher compares have/has and got with faithful friends who are subdivided because of some circumstances. For example, the teacher compares have and got with two naughty and noise pupils who are subdivided at the lesson by a teacher – a subject. Following the example children make up their own stories which help them to memorize word order:

1. Some pupils present have/has and got as a prince and a princess. Every time prince has to solve an important state question, he goes abroad and leaves his princess. This way prince is Have/Has, princess is Got and a subject is a high mountain which divides the couple.

2. Some children compare have/has and got with two villages subdivided with the bridge – a subject.

3. Somebody imagines have/has and got as two beads of the same colour on the rope which are subdivided by a bead of another colour – a subject.

4. Somebody associates have/has and got with two fighting countries and a peace-maker – a subject which stands between them.

5. Some pupils associated the forms Have and Got with two dogs barking too loudly, that's why their owners decided to put a high fence between them – a subject.

To memorize a singular verb form in Present Simple, pupils imagine that a verb feels lonely and boring when he is singular – alone, that's why he takes a small friend with him – suffix –s or –es. Children made up stories about a lonely old man who took his little dog –S for a walk with him, fairy-tales about a little boy who took a balloon –S with him and a story about a traveler who takes luggage –S while having a trip.

Learning Present Continuous Tense, students have already learnt forms of the verb to be and can make up sentences with them. Suffix –ing is a new item for them and they learn how to deal with it making up new linguistic fairy-tales. Children associated a new suffix with a kind of instrument or a special tool:

1. The notional verb comes to the subject and the verb To Be and takes a present with him – suffix –ing.

2. The subject and the verb To Be are building a house and they call a notional verb for help because he has a special instrument – suffix –ing.

3. There were some verses with two friends – the pronoun and the verb To Be who wanted to play but didn't have a ball. They called the verb which had a ball with him – the suffix –ing.

Students who took part in making up linguistic fairy-tales noted that they became more confident in grammatical aspects of English: tenses and forms of verbs. They learnt to memorize word order in questions, deal with different parts of speech and members of a sentence, differ auxiliary and notional verbs. A linguistic fairy-tale doesn't let students be just passive listeners – it makes children be active and creative, because they can invent new ways for understanding and memorizing grammar for themselves. And these new ways of memorizing are more effective than strict rules from a textbook because they consist of words and constructions which are simple and clear for every primary schoolchild.

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